

DEI Terms

Diversity – The characteristics with which we are born, and gain through experience, both seen and unseen, that make us different and similar.

Inclusion – The actions taken to understand, embrace, and leverage the unique strengths and facets of identity for all individuals so that all feel welcomed, valued, and supported.

Microaggressions (microbehaviors) – Subtle, intentional, unintentional, interactions or behaviors that communicate bias toward individuals or groups.

Stereotype- An over-generalized and over-simplified view about an entire group that persists even when contrary evidence is provided.

Explicit bias- Bias that we are aware of.

Implicit/Unconscious bias- Biases that we may not be aware of. These are mental shortcuts, mostly based on stereotypes, which individuals form outside of their conscious awareness.

Prejudice- A pre-judgement (usually negative) for another group without knowing the facts. Prejudice is irrational.

Discrimination- While prejudice is a feeling, discrimination is an act of unequal treatment of people of certain groups.

Systemic/Institutional discrimination- While an individual or a group can be discriminatory, often times an entire institution/system is rooted in discrimination. When an entire institution or society indulges in restricting opportunities for certain groups, it is called systemic discrimination.

Social Hierarchy- Positions or ranks of different sections of the population based on their race, gender, education, class, sexual orientation, disability, immigration status, etc. Those on the top of the hierarchy receive unearned benefits at the expense of those at the bottom.

“-isms”- Social hierarchy gives rise to different “isms” like racism (racial hierarchy), classism (economic system), sexism (sex), ageism (age), heterosexism (sexual orientation), etc.

Intersectionality – The notion that social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, marital status, and age overlap and intersect in dynamic ways that shape each individual. So, an individual’s identity is multi-layered.

Oppression- In a social hierarchical system, the groups that are at the bottom of the social hierarchy face systemic or institutionalized discrimination.

Privilege- Privilege and oppression are two sides of the same coin. When one group is oppressed, the other is privileged. Having privilege does not mean that the person does not face hurdles, rather, it means that a person does not face hurdles because of their social identity.

Ally- A person who supports a group that they may not identify with because they recognize the oppression of that group. An ally commits to support the oppressed group and work with the group to end oppression.

Equity – The outcome of diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression wherein all people have fair access, opportunity, resources, and power to thrive with consideration for and elimination of barriers and privileges that cause oppression.